

whether they were treeless or studded with oak. This bird is, of course, almost invariably met with on the ground, but I have seen it perch in trees.

We found fresh eggs on April 25th at 7000 ft., young in down, with both old birds in attendance, at about the same altitude on June 1st, and young fully grown and in small coveys at 4000 ft. on June 15th.

XL.—*Field-notes on some of the Birds of Cyprus.*

By DOROTHY M. A. BATE.

DURING my stay in Cyprus, from May 1901 until November 1902, I was unfortunately unable to devote much time to observing or collecting the birds of the island. Consequently I can contribute very little to the information that we already possess from Dr. Guillemard's two interesting papers which appeared in 'The Ibis' (1888, p. 94, and 1889, p. 206), and Lord Lilford's "List of the Birds of Cyprus" (Ibis, 1889, p. 305). Besides these there is the list given by Drs. Unger and Kotschy in 'Die Insel Cypem' (Wien, 1865), and a paper on the ornithology of Cyprus by Herr Aug. Müller (J. f. O. 1878, p. 390).

On arriving at Larnaka, which is the chief port, the first glimpse of Cyprus, from an ornithologist's point of view, is distinctly discouraging, inasmuch as a large portion of the island consists of flat, or low hilly, country, parched up and almost destitute of vegetation for the greater part of the year. In early days the island was celebrated for its forests "which not only clothed the whole of its mountain-ranges, but covered the entire central plain with a dense mass, so that it was with difficulty that the land could be cleared for cultivation"*. At the present day this great central plain, or "Mesoreæ," stretching right across the island, which is about sixty miles broad from Morphou in the west to Famagusta in the east, is practically bare of vegetation after the harvest is over. The only exception is an occasional spot

* Encycl. Brit. vi. p. 747.

near a village, or where a well has been dug, which supplies sufficient water for the cultivation of a garden.

When riding along it is rare to see any birds other than the flocks of Larks which abound in the dusty plain, or a company of Griffon Vultures from the crags of the Kerynia range attracted by some carcase lying on the outskirts of a village. These are sometimes joined by the more uncommon Black Vulture, and occasionally by an Eagle. I distinguished two species of the latter, and I believe them to have been the Imperial and Bonelli's Eagles, both of which were procured by Dr. Guillemard. Again, on Troödos, which rises to 6406 ft., and is the highest point of the range which bears its name, there is but little variety among the birds found in the pine-forest. Several of these are restricted to the forest or descend only a short way below its limits—such are the Jay, Crossbill, Cole-Tit, Creeper, and Wren. Besides these the traveller seldom sees any bird but the Raven, which is extremely common, the ubiquitous Eastern Pied Chat, and a few Warblers, Spotted Flycatchers, Chaffinches, and two or three others. In late autumn, when the Blackbirds and Robins arrive in the island, great numbers are found in the hills, and during a day spent in the forest on Troödos in the latter part of November I could see every few yards a Robin hopping among the undergrowth or searching for food on the ground. Although they are extremely common in the plains, I very rarely saw Hawks at any great height on Troödos, though Vultures were not uncommon, and occasionally an Eagle might be seen sailing past. Two other species which are plentiful in the plains, but which I never saw in the Troödos forest, are the Little Owl and the Magpie; the latter was seen at Prodromo about 4500 ft., but seemingly it does not venture further than the edge of the forest.

The best places for obtaining wild fowl and other marsh-frequenting birds are near Famagusta and Kouklia, in the east of the Mesoræa, and at Morphou in the west; in winter the salt-lakes at Larnaka and Limassol are also visited by a good many water-birds. Warblers are generally seen in numbers only where water is found during the greater part

of the year, as for instance near Papho, where there are several streams lasting into the middle of July, if not throughout the summer. In the spring, when travelling about the Kerynia range, I noticed many small birds in the well-cultivated and watered strip of country running at the foot of the limestone-hills west of the Aghirdhir pass. Another good collecting-ground is to be found among the hills for some distance round the large village of Akanthou, on the northern side of the range, which is much damper and comparatively more fertile owing to its proximity to the sea.

Since 1889, when Lord Lilford's "List" was published, the ornithology of Cyprus appears to have been quite neglected until within the last two or three years, during which Mr. C. Glaszner has been sending specimens to the Vienna and other museums. From his collections Dr. J. von Madarász has described the Scops Owl and the Great Tit of the island as distinct species—*Scops cypria* and *Parus aphrodite* respectively (Termés. Füzetek, xxiv. p. 272). Besides these, he has also separated the Jay (*Garrulus glaszneri*) (Orn. MB. x. p. 163, 1902), the Dipper (*Cinclus olympicus*) and the Crossbill (*Loxia guillemardi*) (Orn. MB. xi., Jan. 1903) as distinct.

During a good winter, and with ample time for observation, I believe that it would not be difficult to make several additions to the "List," especially in the matter of marsh-frequenting birds.

It is hoped that the following notes on a few species may be of interest, as adding a little to our knowledge of their distribution and habits in the island. Before commencing them I should like to take this opportunity of expressing my thanks to Dr. R. Bowdler Sharpe for his continual kindness in furthering my work in the Bird Department of the British Museum (Natural History), and for his and Mr. W. R. Ogilvie-Grant's kind help in determining some of the species.

1. MUSCICAPA GRISOLA.

This bird was found commonly not only in the plains in spring but also on Troödos during the summer.

2. *MONTICOLA CYANUS*.

I found the Blue Rock-Thrush not uncommon in the Kerynia range of hills, on the higher portions and on the northern slopes of which there is always a certain amount of scrubby vegetation, and here and there some water which lasts throughout the summer. This Rock-Thrush evidently breeds in the island, for early in June 1902 I saw several individuals among the ruins of Kantara Castle, one of which could only have left the nest a very short time. I also saw some near Buffa Vento about the same date, and during the winter I observed others in many different places in these hills.

3. *RUTICILLA PHENICURUS*.

I saw a few Redstarts among the pine-trees on Troödos during the summer, and in winter I found them common in the low hills north of Nikosia.

4. *SAXICOLA MORIO*.

This is most certainly, as Lord Lilford remarks, the characteristic Chat of Cyprus, and is one of the commonest birds all over the island from the sea-level to the top of Olympus, over 6000 ft.

Specimens procured on Troödos in summer appear to be unusually dark in colour on the back.

5. *SAXICOLA FINSCHI*.

It seems curious that Dr. Guillemard, during his two visits to Cyprus, should only have met with this Chat once, at Cape Greco in February. In winter I found it not at all uncommon on the lower slopes of the Kerynia range, and also met with it in the Larnaka district, and once near Papho. It evidently arrives in the island about the end of October, as I first saw it at that time both in 1901 and 1902. The latest date on which it was observed in the spring was on March 23rd close to Papho.

I only succeeded in securing one specimen of this Chat (a fine male), for it is very wary, keeping well out of gun-shot, although when riding I was often able to approach it within a few yards.

Though there might be a number of these Chats on a hill-

side, they almost invariably went about singly or at most in pairs. It would seem as if when once an individual settled anywhere it remained within a short distance of the same place, for I noticed that wherever one had been seen I was certain to find it again.

6. *HYPOLAIS PALLIDA*.

This Warbler is very common all over the island, and near Papho numbers of nests were found, built in the brambles and bushes overrunning the steep banks of the streams. Eggs were found hard-set on the 8th of May, but were also procured fresh up to the 4th of June. The old bird sits very closely, almost allowing itself to be touched while on the nest.

7. *SYLVIA MELANOTHORAX*.

Lord Lilford and Dr. Guillemard seem to have found this bird chiefly in the low country wherever there was sufficient scrubby vegetation, though the latter mentions having shot specimens "from the sea-level up to 2000 ft. or more in altitude." Mr. Glaszner has procured specimens from Stavro Vouni, in the Larnaka district, which rises to 2260 ft. above the sea.

There is a specimen in the British Museum, which was procured by Mr. Pearse in November at Kykkou, at about 4300 ft., and in the summer I found the bird common on Troödos at 4600 ft. There it spends its time skulking among the low ilex, arbutus, and other shrubs, moving about always very near to, and sometimes on, the ground.

Thus it is evident that it is distributed over the whole of the island wherever suitable vegetation prevails.

8. *TROGLODYTES CYPRIOTES*.

Anorthura cypriotes, Bate, Bull. B. O. C. xiii. p. 51 (1903).

Unfortunately I have only been able to examine five skins of this bird from Cyprus, but, so far as it is possible to judge from such scanty material, it is believed to be sufficiently distinct to be described as a new species. As already mentioned in the 'Bulletin of the British

Ornithologists Club,' it differs from the typical form in being more extensively barred on both the upper and under surface, while the tail is only slightly more rufous than the back, and in the general brown colour of the upper parts and flanks being of a more chestnut shade. It may be described as follows:—

Head, neck, and back reddish brown, the mantle, entire back, and wing-coverts marked with irregular dusky black bars. Rump and tail only slightly more rufous than the back, the tail marked with slightly irregular dark brown bars, of which there are about nine visible on the central feathers. Loes and ear-coverts lighter than the crown of the head, the latter having darker markings to the feathers. There is also a distinct light eyebrow. Chin, throat, breast, and abdomen pale brownish white, the throat slightly marked with dusky bars, the rest of the under parts crossed by narrow transverse bars of dusky black; under tail-coverts similar, but having strongly marked white tips to the feathers. Flanks and axillaries washed with rufous brown. Primaries dark brown, the outer web darkest and crossed by transverse bars of pale brownish white, which are visible on the under surface. The metacarpal region and under wing-coverts brownish white with narrow, dark brown bars. Irides brown, legs and feet light brown. Total length 3·7 inches; wing 2·8; tail 1·3; culmen 0·55; tarsus 0·65.

One immature specimen is of a much darker colour throughout, and the dusky transverse bars extend over the entire under parts; it closely resembles some of the specimens of *T. neglectus* in the British Museum.

This Wren I found plentiful on Troödos, particularly among the bracken and low bushes by the streams close to Government House and near the government offices, which are about 5300 ft. above the level of the sea. Its range appears to be restricted, for on the southern slopes of the hills I never found it below about 3500 ft., between Kato Platraes and Mandria. At about the same height on the northern side of the range I was told that a nest of this species had been found near Kalapanyoti.

I invariably found this bird close to one of the streams, which on Troödos are plentiful and perennial.

9. *CERTHIA FAMILIARIS.*

The Creepers from Cyprus are of an interesting dark race which appears to agree with the subspecies, *Certhia familiaris harterti*, from Asia Minor, described by Herr C. E. Hellmayr (J. f. O. 1901, p. 189). It seems to be a constant form, as I have before me a series of seventeen specimens, procured from May to October, all agreeing in coloration with one another. In the British Museum there are two skins from Turin, one from Bordighera, and another from Switzerland, which hardly differ from those from Cyprus. On the other hand, this dark race is not the only form found in Asia Minor.

As, presumably, the Creeper of Cyprus originally came from the same stock as those now found in Asia Minor and the south-east of Europe, it would be interesting if some one who has travelled in these countries could suggest any cause, such as difference in climate, vegetation, &c., which might have led to the sole survival or independent evolution of the darker and the non-occurrence of the lighter form in this island.

It appears to be a very suggestive fact that it is not the Creeper alone that is remarkable for the darkness of its coloration, but also the Cypriote Scops Owl, Jay, Crossbill, Cole-Tit, and Eastern Pied Chat, all of which, with the exception of the last named, have been described as peculiar to Cyprus.

Mr. Heron, of the British Museum, tells me that in the butterflies of Cyprus the colours are, as a whole, richer, and perhaps slightly darker, than in the typical forms, and I have noticed the same thing in a moth—*Zamacra flabellaria*—from this locality*.

It is possible that when the whole fauna of the island comes to be thoroughly worked out this dark coloration may be found a characteristic feature thereof.

It is a well-known general rule that animals inhabiting

* See 'The Entomologist,' vol. xxxvi., May 1903, p. 107.

warm or tropical forest-regions are more richly coloured and contrast markedly with those found in barren or desert countries. This, together with the fact that Cyprus within historic times was well wooded and presumably well watered and fertile, may possibly help to throw some light on what may be the partial persistence of a former general darker coloration in the fauna of the island.

Dr. Hartert, in his key to the Certhiidae (Nov. Zool. 1887, vol. iv. p. 138), gives as the distinguishing characteristic of *C. familiaris* with its subspecies, "Fourth primary with a very pale fulvous mark in the middle of the outer web." This certainly does not obtain in the birds from Cyprus, as in all the seventeen skins which I have examined the pale fulvous mark first occurs on the "fifth" primary. As in *C. f. brachydactyla*, the bill is slightly longer and the hind claw shorter than in the typical *C. familiaris* and the British form.

The Cyprian Creeper is confined to the pine-forests of Troödos, the central range of the island, where it is not uncommon. I do not believe that it is ever seen lower than about 4000 ft., and then only where the edge of the forest extends so far.

10. COCCYSTES GLANDARIUS.

During the spring of 1902, when travelling about the island, I found the Great Spotted Cuckoo not uncommon. It appeared to be most plentiful close to the Kerynia range and among the gardens on the lower slopes of the same hills west of the Aghirdhir Pass. On one occasion when at the Larnaka salt-lake an individual, which was sitting on the low stump of a tree, allowed me to approach within a few yards.

11. CORACIAS GARRULA.

Lord Liford, in his "List," says that this bird "breeds abundantly in Cyprus in soft banks of marl and sand." During the two springs which I spent in the island I found numbers of their "nests," but always in holes in cliffs or in the walls of houses, and never in situations such as he describes.

12. MEROPS APIASTER.

Lord Lilford was informed that these birds finally left the island before the middle of July, but this was contrary to my experience. I shot one on the 17th of July close to Papho, where they were flying about in large numbers, and on the 17th of the following month they were said to be still found on the plains. I was told that about this time they desert the plains and go up to the hills, finally leaving the island about the beginning of October. Certainly I both saw and heard them continually on Troödos during the summer and up to the end of September, but met with none on my return to the plains on the 7th of October.

Although I have seen flocks flying about overhead when I was at an elevation of 5000 ft., I never noticed any of them settling on trees above the edge of the forest, which is about 4000 ft. at the point where these observations were made.

13. PTEROCLES ARENARIUS.

Both Dr. Guillemard and Lord Lilford mention having heard of a Sand-Grouse occurring in Cyprus, but they do not appear to have procured it. The latter includes it in his "List" under the name of *Pterocles alchata*, which is that also given in the lists published by Drs. Unger and Kotschy (Die Insel Cypem, 1865, p. 571) and Aug. Müller (J. f. O. 1879, p. 385). I only succeeded in procuring one specimen, from the bazaar in Nikosia in November 1901, and this proves to be an immature male of *P. arenarius*. Although believing Sand-Grouse to be not uncommon in the central plain, I never saw an example, though I picked up some feathers belonging to this species not far from Nikosia. An individual kept in a cage appeared to be quite tame; but in a wild state they are said to be very shy and difficult to approach, which probably accounts for my failure to get other specimens from the bazaar, for the native sportsman has a great dislike to wasting his powder over a long shot.

I was told that some of these birds remain all the year

round in the Mesoræa, where they breed and where their eggs have been found. It is said that their numbers are increased in the autumn by fresh arrivals in the island.

14. *FRANCOLINUS VULGARIS.*

Soon after arriving in Cyprus I was fortunate enough to see a good many of these handsome birds not far from Papho, and later was shown a nest which had been found

Text-fig. 17.



Nest and Eggs of Francolin.

by a shepherd. This consisted merely of a hollow in the ground lined with dead grass, and was situated under a small bush in the middle of some standing corn. On the 28th of May it contained eleven eggs (see text-fig. 17). The hen bird sat very closely, allowing me to fix my camera within a few yards, and only leaving the nest when I pushed aside some tufts of grass with a long stick, after which she remained close at hand, uttering a shrill and plaintive noise.

15. *FULICA ATRA.*

The Coot is said to have increased largely in numbers since the completion of the irrigation works in the Famagusta district. In October 1901 I saw enormous numbers of these birds on the large reservoir at Kouklia, and made an entry in my note-book to the effect that the water in places was black with them. I was told that they build in the corn-fields round the edge of this water, and that the natives collect and eat great quantities of their eggs.

16. *CICONIA ALBA.*

Apparently the only notice of the White Stork occurring in Cyprus is that made by Lord Lilford in his "List." He writes, that when at Galinaporni, in the Karpass, he saw a large flock of these birds flying landwards from the south, but did not see them alight on the island. On October 27th, 1901, when on the way to Kouklia Marsh I observed three standing in some low-lying cotton-fields, but there being no cover behind which to approach them we failed to secure one. After being fired at they circled overhead and remained in the air for some time, while later we noticed that they had returned and settled again in the same cotton-fields.

XLI.—*On a presumed new Species of Redstart from the Island of Sardinia.* By HENRY H. GIGLIOLI, H.M.B.O.U. &c.

ON the 1st of December, 1902, I received from a correspondent at Lanusei, in the island of Sardinia, two small birds, which were evidently Redstarts, but were quite new to me and caused me no small surprise, being totally different from anything I had seen during well-nigh forty years of experience in Italian ornithology.

They had been captured alive on the 25th of November, 1902, in a haystack during a northerly gale, at Loceri, a village in the hills above Lanusei, in the Ogliastra district, just beneath the Gennargentu mountain group, on the east side of Sardinia. The shepherd who caught them put them